



**June 24, 2008**

### **Senate passes bill to ensure transportation funds are wisely spent**

Legislation was recently approved by the Senate instructing the Michigan Department of Transportation to use competitive bidders with a proven track record on road projects exceeding \$1 million.

Senate Bill 1320 would require MDOT to contract with pre-qualified private sector bidders on such projects.

MDOT uses four major factors to pre-qualify a bidder:

- Financial resources and related information;
- Experience, including that of key personnel on work of a similar nature;
- Past performance; and
- Availability of equipment and facilities proposed for use on the department's work.

The department then rates the bidders, assigning a higher rating to those who scored well. Those who score poorly are not pre-qualified.

SB 1320 will now advance to the House of Representatives for consideration.

### **Soldier principal-residence exemption bill approved by Senate**

The Senate recently passed legislation allowing active-duty military personnel who are absent from their residence to continue to receive a principal residence exemption for rented property.

Current law does not allow landlords to claim the principal residence tax credit on rental properties. Senate Bill 886 allows a continuation of the principal residence exemption for property rented or leased while a military homeowner is away on active duty.

The measure provides a three-year principal residence exemption if:

- The owner is absent from the residence while on active duty in the armed forces;
- The dwelling would otherwise qualify as the owner's principal residence; and
- The owner files an affidavit with the assessor of the local tax-collecting unit that it is his intent to occupy the dwelling as a principal residence upon completion of active duty.

SB 886 now heads to the Michigan House for further consideration.

## **Bill introduced to help owners save their homes from foreclosure**

Recently introduced legislation would allow the county register of deeds to determine and release the dollar amount needed for a homeowner to redeem a home from foreclosure.

Current law does not allow the register of deeds to provide this information to the homeowner. Under Senate Bill 1390, a register of deeds may determine the amount necessary for redemption and disclose this information.

After a home has been "sold" at a foreclosure sale, homeowners have a six-month redemption period to secure the money to save their residence.

The measure comes on the heels of an announcement that Michigan foreclosures have risen 35 percent from a year ago. There were 12,792 foreclosures statewide in May. The state's foreclosure rate was up from ninth in the nation in April to fifth in May.

SB 1390 has been referred to the Senate Banking and Financial Institutions Committee.

## **Senate approves post-purchase hand gun inspection reform bill**

Legislation to eliminate post-purchase safety inspection requirements for pistols was approved recently by the Senate.

State law now requires individuals to obtain a purchase license and consent to criminal background checks. After the purchase, the gun owner must take the pistol to a local law enforcement officer for an inspection and to turn in a different registration form.

Senate Bill 370 would allow new pistol owners to mail in the registration within 10 days after it was purchased or obtained. SB 371 would create a state civil infraction for individuals who fail to return the registration during that time. The gun owner could be fined up to \$250.

The Michigan Coalition for Responsible Gun Owners, Michigan United Conservation Clubs, National Rifle Association, Shooters Alliance for Firearm Rights and Great Lakes Shooting Sports Association support the legislation.

The measures have been sent to the House of Representatives for consideration.

## ***Contact information***

Thank you for your interest in our current state issues. If you would like to receive future legislative updates via e-mail, or have any questions or concerns, please contact my office at [www.SenatorValdeGarcia.com](http://www.SenatorValdeGarcia.com) or by calling 517-373-2420.

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